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Proudly representing Eastern Washington in the United States House of Representatives

INSIDE CONGRESS
FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 1, 2002
by United States Representative
George R. Nethercutt, Jr.

Welcome to this week's edition of Inside Congress. I am glad to share with you a little of my work in the national legislature. Please follow the listed links or contact my office for more information on the topics mentioned here.

PRESIDENT BUSH DELIVERS STATE OF THE UNION

On Tuesday evening, I was proud to be present as President Bush delivered his State of the Union address. Among the President's priorities are winning the war on terrorism, increasing protection of our homeland and revitalizing our economy.

The President has an aggressive agenda for winning the war on terrorism while maintaining our security at home. President Bush proposed the largest military spending increase in twenty years and a doubling of homeland defense funding. Border control programs and seaport security will be dramatically enhanced which will add to our security in the Northwest.

We need to revitalize our economy. I was pleased with the President's outline for job creation. I agree with President Bush that creating jobs and maintaining a strong economy requires good education, access to quality and affordable health care, an expanded trade policy as well as a comprehensive energy policy for our Nation. We in the Pacific Northwest understand the importance of a national energy policy. By decreasing our dependence on foreign resources for our energy supply, we will increase our economic well being and provide for a stronger national defense.

WASHINGTON STATE SEEN AS POTENTIAL TARGET

This week we learned that U.S. troops recovered evidence in Afghanistan indicating that the Space Needle and Grand Coulee Dam may have been specifically targeted by al Qaeda operatives.

While intelligence officials may not know of an imminent threat within our state, the evidence recovered in Afghanistan should not be taken lightly. Considering the significance of the Space Needle and the crucial importance of Grand Coulee Dam to power needs throughout the West, we must remain vigilant, on alert and prepared for an attack.

After the attacks on September 11, I advised all public facilities in the area to conduct a threat assessment and prepare or update disaster plans if they had not already done so.

Last fall I requested that security be upgraded at the Grand Coulee Dam in separate meetings with the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Pat Wood, the Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Steve Wright, and with the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, David Bernhardt. I also sent a list of questions concerning the potential vulnerability of Grand Coulee Dam to the Bureau of Reclamation.

Grand Coulee is the largest dam in the United States and the third largest in the world. The Park Service has upgraded its enforcement presence at the dam, but the appropriateness of Park Service law enforcement guarding the massive facility has been questioned. It is important to note that the National Guard has been assigned to protect other dams in the United States. Our Northwest power resources, our ports and our landmarks must be properly protected. The President has told the Nation that many terrorists still remain hidden in the United States. We must assume that they plan future attacks and remain alert.

ON THE FLOOR:

Here is a recap of the legislative activity for the week:

H.Res. 335 - Honoring the contributions of Catholic schools. It passed 388-1. I voted Yes.

SCHEDULE

This week I was proud to attend President Bush's State of the Union address on Tuesday night. Early Wednesday morning, I departed for the Republican Retreat, where myself and other Members of Congress spent several days discussing our priorities for the up-coming session. The President spoke to us on Friday.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

I always enjoy hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to you in any matter. Here are some of the ways you may reach me, especially if you know of others who may want to receive this report each week or would like to be removed from this mailing list:

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